

18 Oct. 1966

Dear Miss McAlinden:

Sorry to be so tardy with these identifications. I seem to get snowed under with correspondence, etc. these days. In rereading your letter, I seem you have the same difficulty and even used the same expression.

No. 1 - surely must be Amaranthus caudatus L., Love-lies-bleeding or Tassel Flower, despite the specimen consisting of only two leaves. The colorful upper leaves and black seeds are the give-away. Note what a little color does in name at least for this close kin of the pigweed.

No. 2 - is one of our native tarweeds, Holocarpha hermannii (Greene) Keck. I am not aware that it is good for anything, though under a handlens the peculiar tack-glands on the inflorescence are quite fascinating. The tarweeds are quite characteristic of California's golden brown slopes and dry fields.

No. 3 - is one of the sprigletop grasses, Leptochloa uninervia (Presl) Hitchc. and Chase. + suppose you could call it a water grass for it usually inhabits ditches and similar moist places.

No. 4 - is Rhamnus californica Esch., coffee-berry. I am not sure it is poisonous but I would not want to put it to a test personally since it is a cousin of the Cascara Sagrada, our Rhamnus purshiana.

No. 5 - is Prunus ilicifolia, our common holly-leaved cherry of the chaparral. It is quite harmless although the pit takes up most of the space in the drupaceous fruit.

No. 6 - is Echinochloa crusgalli, barnyard grass, and is a common weedy grass. It is not closely related to No. 7, Johnson grass, Sorghum halepense. Note that the latter is a perennial with heavy rhizomes and the former a fibrous-rooted annual. There is not question of hybridization here. However, your correspondent is quite perspicacious in noting that there are similarities, for both grasses do belong to the same subfamily of grasses, hence are not distantly unrelated.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Thorne